

## Puget Sound Action Team Partnership

In response to the challenges facing the Sound, the Washington State Legislature created the Puget Sound Action Team in 1996, to protect and restore Puget Sound and its spectacular diversity of life now and for future generations. The Partnership organizes its work around three goals:

1. Protect and restore Puget Sound's water quality.
2. Protect and restore habitat for all native species in Puget Sound.
3. Protect the biological resources of Puget Sound and recover species at risk, including orcas, salmon and groundfish.

To achieve these goals, the Action Team Partnership currently focuses its work on seven core priorities, which cumulatively represent critical threats to the ecosystem:

- Clean up contaminated sites and sediments.
- Reduce continuing toxic contamination and prevent future contamination.
- Reduce the harm from stormwater runoff.
- Prevent nutrient and pathogen pollution caused by human and animal wastes.
- Protect shorelines and other critical areas that provide important ecological functions.
- Restore degraded nearshore and freshwater habitats.
- Conserve and recover orca, salmon, forage fish and groundfish.

### The Partnership's Structure

The Action Team Partnership's work is to define, coordinate and implement the state's environmental agenda for Puget Sound. The Partnership is made up of three interrelated entities.

The **Action Team** is a 17-member governing body, which includes:

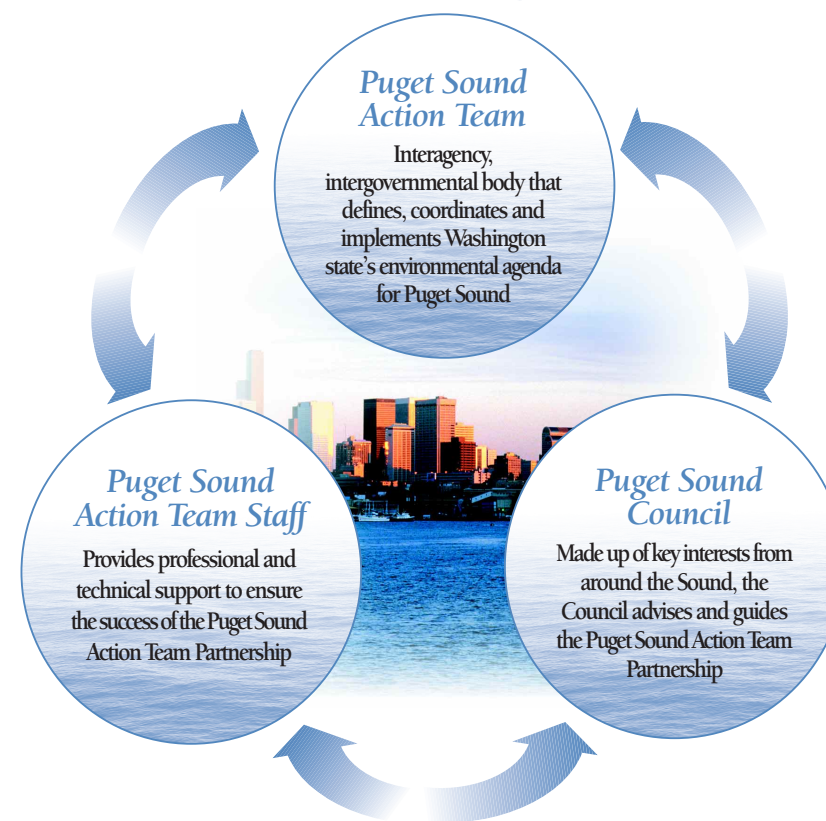
- Directors from 10 state agencies.
- Representatives from three federal agencies.
- One representative of tribal governments.
- Two representatives of local governments (city and county).
- A chairperson appointed by the Governor.

The **Puget Sound Council** provides guidance to the Action Team and reviews its progress, and is made up of the following:

- Seven representatives of key Puget Sound interests, including tribal governments, counties, cities, agriculture, environmental community, shellfish industry and business community.
- Four representatives of the Washington State Legislature, two from the House of Representatives and two from the Senate.
- Chairperson of the Action Team.

The **Puget Sound Action Team Staff** provides professional and technical services to help the partner agencies and others in their efforts to protect, restore and sustain Puget Sound. The Action Team is currently made up of 24 full-time staff.

## Puget Sound Action Team PARTNERSHIP



### The Puget Sound Action Team Members

**Washington State Government, directors of the following agencies:**  
Community, Trade and Economic Development  
Conservation Commission  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Ecology  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Health  
Department of Natural Resources  
Department of Transportation  
Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Parks and Recreation Commission

**Tribal Government**  
Tulalip Tribes, representing Puget Sound Tribes

**Local Government**  
City of Burien, representing Puget Sound cities  
Whatcom County, representing Puget Sound counties

**Federal Government (non-voting)**  
NOAA Fisheries  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

For more information about the Puget Sound Action Team Partnership, please visit [www.psat.wa.gov](http://www.psat.wa.gov) or call (800) 54-SOUND. If you need this publication in an alternative format, contact **(800) 833-6388**.

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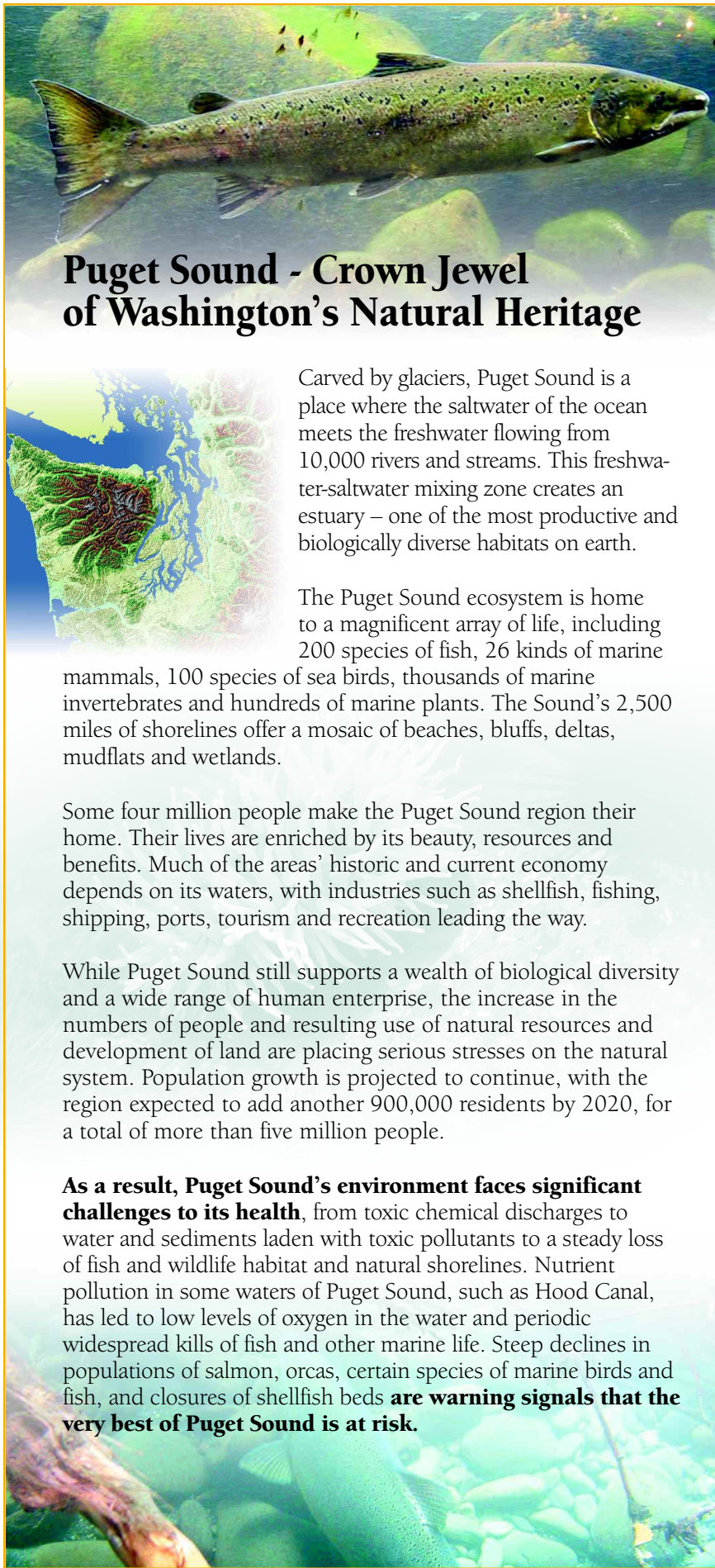


## Puget Sound Action Team



## Mission: Protect and Restore Puget Sound





## Puget Sound - Crown Jewel of Washington's Natural Heritage

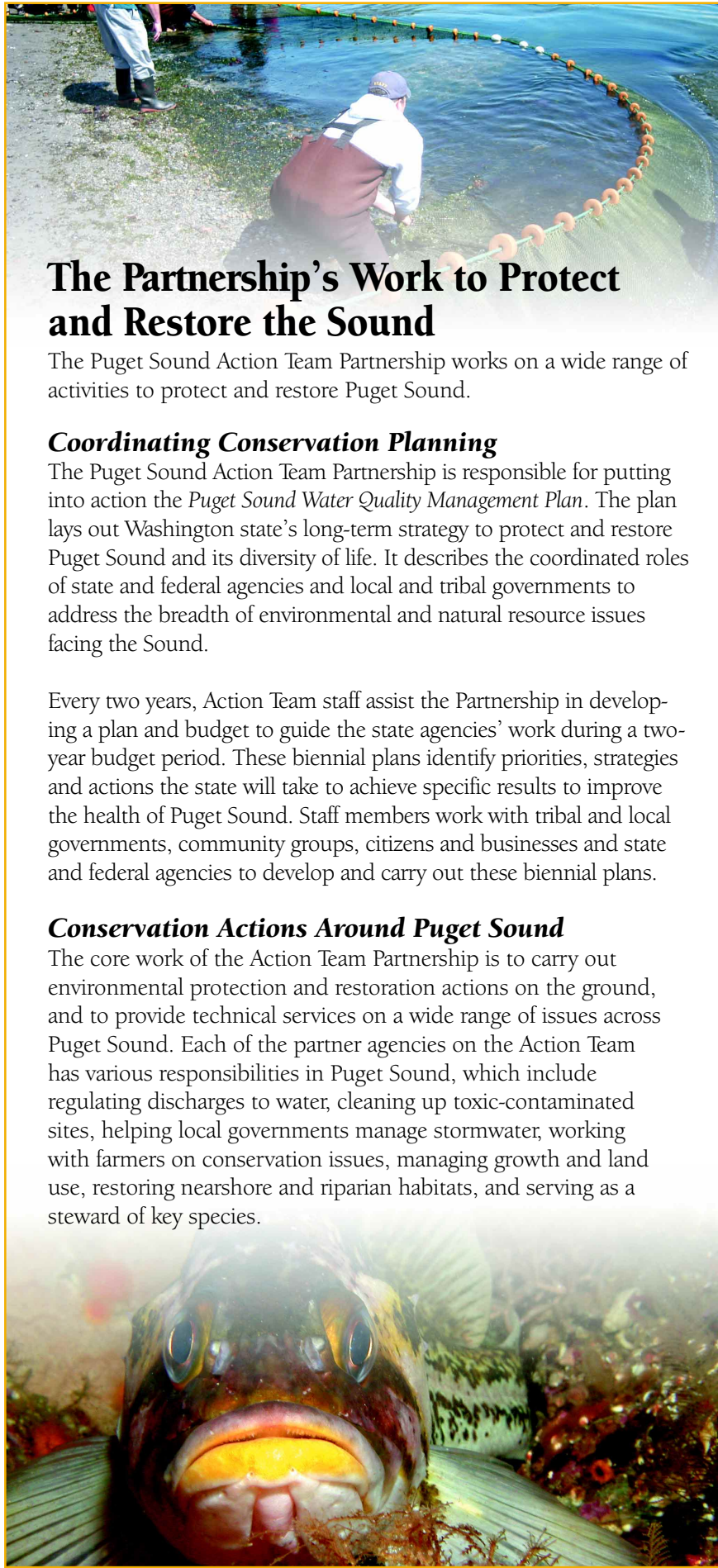
Carved by glaciers, Puget Sound is a place where the saltwater of the ocean meets the freshwater flowing from 10,000 rivers and streams. This freshwater-saltwater mixing zone creates an estuary – one of the most productive and biologically diverse habitats on earth.

The Puget Sound ecosystem is home to a magnificent array of life, including 200 species of fish, 26 kinds of marine mammals, 100 species of sea birds, thousands of marine invertebrates and hundreds of marine plants. The Sound's 2,500 miles of shorelines offer a mosaic of beaches, bluffs, deltas, mudflats and wetlands.

Some four million people make the Puget Sound region their home. Their lives are enriched by its beauty, resources and benefits. Much of the areas' historic and current economy depends on its waters, with industries such as shellfish, fishing, shipping, ports, tourism and recreation leading the way.

While Puget Sound still supports a wealth of biological diversity and a wide range of human enterprise, the increase in the numbers of people and resulting use of natural resources and development of land are placing serious stresses on the natural system. Population growth is projected to continue, with the region expected to add another 900,000 residents by 2020, for a total of more than five million people.

**As a result, Puget Sound's environment faces significant challenges to its health**, from toxic chemical discharges to water and sediments laden with toxic pollutants to a steady loss of fish and wildlife habitat and natural shorelines. Nutrient pollution in some waters of Puget Sound, such as Hood Canal, has led to low levels of oxygen in the water and periodic widespread kills of fish and other marine life. Steep declines in populations of salmon, orcas, certain species of marine birds and fish, and closures of shellfish beds **are warning signals that the very best of Puget Sound is at risk.**



## The Partnership's Work to Protect and Restore the Sound

The Puget Sound Action Team Partnership works on a wide range of activities to protect and restore Puget Sound.


### Coordinating Conservation Planning

The Puget Sound Action Team Partnership is responsible for putting into action the *Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan*. The plan lays out Washington state's long-term strategy to protect and restore Puget Sound and its diversity of life. It describes the coordinated roles of state and federal agencies and local and tribal governments to address the breadth of environmental and natural resource issues facing the Sound.

Every two years, Action Team staff assist the Partnership in developing a plan and budget to guide the state agencies' work during a two-year budget period. These biennial plans identify priorities, strategies and actions the state will take to achieve specific results to improve the health of Puget Sound. Staff members work with tribal and local governments, community groups, citizens and businesses and state and federal agencies to develop and carry out these biennial plans.

### Conservation Actions Around Puget Sound

The core work of the Action Team Partnership is to carry out environmental protection and restoration actions on the ground, and to provide technical services on a wide range of issues across Puget Sound. Each of the partner agencies on the Action Team has various responsibilities in Puget Sound, which include regulating discharges to water, cleaning up toxic-contaminated sites, helping local governments manage stormwater, working with farmers on conservation issues, managing growth and land use, restoring nearshore and riparian habitats, and serving as a steward of key species.



### Informing and Involving Puget Sound Residents

Action Team partners and staff work hard to involve and engage local people, businesses, elected officials and others in efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound. The Action Team staff conducts a variety of education and outreach efforts, including:

- Conducting workshops about key issues and tools for conservation and sustainability.
- Administering the Public Involvement and Education (PIE) fund. The PIE fund supports projects that educate and involve businesses, farmers, homeowners and other citizens so that they can become more effective stewards for the Sound.

The Action Team staff also produces a number of publications for citizens, policymakers, resource managers and others involved in work to protect and restore Puget Sound. Regular publications include *Sound Waves*, a quarterly newsletter with conservation news and issues, and *Puget Sound Report*, a biennial publication that reports on Puget Sound's environment and the state's efforts to improve the Sound's health.

### Developing Environmental Policy

The Action Team staff is the central voice in state government for Puget Sound and its conservation priorities. The staff defines the issues of greatest importance to Puget Sound, and works with partners and others to recommend and initiate courses of action. The staff tracks and participates in significant policy development in Puget Sound, promotes practical solutions and works to find alternatives to ideas and projects that may cause serious harm to Puget Sound.

### Conducting Research and Monitoring

Research and monitoring are vital to understanding the dynamic status of Puget Sound's health. The Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program brings together Action Team partner agencies, along with local, tribal and federal agencies to assess environmental trends in the Sound. Resource managers use information from the program to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions, identify emerging issues and set priorities.

Every two years, the Action Team staff hosts a regional research conference, which provides a forum for scientists and resource managers to share recent research findings, and chart the course of future research needs.